

Please amend the following claims:

1. (Once amended) A stable, sterile gelled composition which comprises: a matrix containing a negative charged polymer selected from the group consisting of polysulfated glucosoglycans, glucosaminoglycans, mucopolysaccharides, and mixtures thereof and having an [mean] average molecular weight between about 650,000 and 800,000 blended with a nonionic polymer, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4 and the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.5% by weight of the resulting composition, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

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6. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer[s] is 1:0.5 to 2.

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7. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer[s] is 1:0.7 to 2.5.

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8. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

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9. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight of the resulting composition.

10. (Once amended) A method for the treatment of a condition in animals for a sustained period of time, which comprises:

topically applying a therapeutically effective dose of a gelled composition comprising a polymer matrix which is suspended in a liquid medium; wherein the polymer matrix contains a negatively charged polymer selected from the group consisting of polysulfated glucosoglycans, glucosaminoglycans, mucopolysaccharides, and mixtures thereof blended with a nonionic polymer, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

13. (Once amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the material has an average molecular weight below about 800,000.

14. (Once Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the material has an average molecular weight between 700,000 and 775,000.

15. (Once amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the hyaluronate salt is the sodium salt and has an [mean] average molecular weight from about 650,000 to about 800,000, a sulphated ash content below about 15%, a protein content below about 5% and purity of at least 98%.

21. (Once amended) A process for the use of a composition as a medical device, for drug delivery, the application of a diagnostic agent, or the prevention of post operative adhesions, said process comprises: [topically administering to a mammal an aqueous based gelled composition containing a polymer matrix composed of negatively charged polymers blended with nonionic polymers]

(a) forming an aqueous based gelled composition containing a polymer matrix composed of negatively charged polymers blended with nonionic polymers, wherein the composition is storage stable; and

(b) topically administering the aqueous based gelled composition to an animal.

24. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight below about 800,000.

25. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight between 700,000 and 775,000.

26. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the hyaluronate salt is the sodium salt and has an [mean] average molecular weight [form] from about 650,000 to about 800,000, a sulphated ash content below about 15%, a protein content below about 5% and purity of at least 98%.

29. (Once amended) An antiarthritic gelled composition, which comprises: therapeutically effective amounts of an active NSAID drug dispersed within a matrix containing a negative charged polymer having an [mean] average molecular weight between about 650,000 and 800,000 blended with a nonionic polymer, wherein the molar ratio of the charged polymer to the nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4 and the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

34. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 29, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

35. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 29, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.2 to 1.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

37. (Once amended) A method for treating an arthritic condition, which comprises: topically administering to a mammal an aqueous based gelled composition containing therapeutically effective amounts of an NSAID drug dispersed within a polymer matrix composed of a negatively charged polymer[s] blended with a nonionic polymer[s], wherein the molar ratio of the negatively charged polymer to nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

43. (Once amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

44. (Once amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight of the resulting composition.

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